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Letter dated 28 November 2007 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to my report of 28 September 2007 (S/2007/576) on developments in Guinea-Bissau and on the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS), in which I indicated my intention to submit proposals on how best we can continue to provide effective assistance for national efforts in order to contribute to the sustainable stabilization of Guinea-Bissau.

During 2007, UNOGBIS continued to contribute to the stabilization and reconciliation efforts of Guinea-Bissau. While encouraging progress has been achieved, especially in strengthening cooperative relations between the various branches of the Government and among the three main political parties, much more remains to be done to consolidate and sustain the momentum for democratic governance in order to prevent a relapse into conflict. Moreover, new challenges, in particular the threat of drug and human trafficking and organized crime, need to be addressed in order to prevent the unravelling of the important gains made so far.

Since the Government of Prime Minister N'Dafa Cabi assumed office in April 2007, it has taken significant steps to contribute to stabilization through government reform. Of particular importance is the determination of the Government to implement its Minimum Public Finance Stability Programme and the plan of action to advance the crucial objective of security sector reform. Externally, the Government of Prime Minister Cabi has actively re-engaged with the international community, especially the international financial institutions and regional neighbours.

Notwithstanding those constructive efforts, Guinea-Bissau remains fragile. Internal political tensions intensify, in advance of legislative elections in 2008, socio-economic conditions worsen and the multiple threats posed by drug trafficking and organized crime spread.

I have therefore responded favourably to the request from Prime Minister Cabi for United Nations assistance in the organization of legislative elections in 2008, and I have welcomed the generous support provided recently by the Government of Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States to help the Government of Guinea-Bissau initiate a concrete security sector reform implementation process to prepare future demobilized military personnel to reintegrate constructively into civilian life. In light of the above, I would like to recommend that the mandate of UNOGBIS be extended for an additional year, until

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31 December 2008, to allow the Office to continue to assist Guinea-Bissau as it confronts the challenges of peacebuilding and strives to bring about political stabilization. The mandate would also be slightly revised, to allow UNOGBIS to contribute to mobilizing international support for national efforts to eradicate drug trafficking.

Accordingly, the activities of UNOGBIS for 2008 would focus on: (a) supporting national reconciliation and dialogue; (b) assisting with the implementation of security sector reform; (c) facilitating efforts to combat drug and human trafficking and organized crime; (d) assisting with the holding of credible and transparent legislative elections in 2008, in close cooperation with the United Nations country team and other international partners; (e) promoting respect for the rule of law and human rights; (f) mainstreaming a gender perspective into peacebuilding, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); (g) facilitating efforts to curb proliferation of small arms and light weapons and contributing to the collection of weapons illicitly held; (h) helping in the mobilization of international assistance; and (i) enhancing cooperation with the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the European Union and other international partners.

I should also like to refer to the presidential statement on Guinea-Bissau (S/PRST/2007/38), adopted on 19 October 2007, in which the Security Council requested me "to present proposals on how best the United Nations could provide effective assistance in an integrated and holistic manner to national efforts" for stabilization. It is my intention, following the holding of credible and transparent legislative elections in 2008, to explore the possibility of transforming the current United Nations Peacebuilding Office, UNOGBIS, into an integrated mission in Guinea-Bissau, and to make recommendations thereon to the Council. Such a mission, if deemed appropriate, would provide a holistic approach to addressing the complex and multidimensional situation facing Guinea-Bissau. I would submit concrete recommendations to that end following the successful organization of the elections.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ban** Ki-moon